

GCSE MFL webinar

Your questions answered

GCSE MFL in the spotlight: results insights webinar resource

Autumn 2019



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How to use this resource

This webinar resource booklet collates and summarises all of the questions asked during the GCSE MFL in the spotlight: results insight webinar. Here you will find detailed responses to all of your questions from our subject experts – including those unanswered on the day. We have grouped related questions into themes and questions and answers into tables, to make this resource as concise, clear and accessible as possible.

For any questions asked that are not related to results insights, or for any further questions, you can get in-touch with your subject team.

For extra information on results:

- Join our Heads of Curriculum for a [video breakdown of GCSE results](#).
- Access our free Enhanced Results Analysis tool. We've created [two-minute tutorials](#) to show you how.
- Navigate to [e-AQA](#) to download the full report on the exam for a detailed breakdown.
- Book on to one of our [Feedback events](#), for a detailed view of results, student answers and examiner commentaries.

Theme one: tiering

Questions and answers

Question	Expert answer
<p>The Foundation tier papers in Listening and Reading include questions across the entire grade range 1 – 5. If the range of grades on the Higher paper is 3 – 9, why are there not some very accessible questions on these papers?</p>	<p>If you have a look at our tiering guide on the website, it gives you a visual explanation of the make-up of the Listening and Reading papers in terms of targeted grades. Although a Grade 3 is available at Higher tier, it is not a targeted grade so the low demand questions at Higher tier are targeted at Grade 4 and Grade 5. Sometimes individual questions don't perform as anticipated and this is taken into account in terms of where the grade boundaries are set for that paper in that series.</p>
<p>What tier should borderline Grade 4/5 students be entered for?</p>	<p>Students operating around Grades 4-5 and below should be entered for Foundation tier as two thirds of the questions on the Higher tier Listening and Reading papers are targeted at Grades 6 and above. Please see our detailed advice on this on our website – https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/languages/AQA-GCSE-MFL-TG-FH.PDF</p>
<p>Is there any possibility that Ofqual will consider a non-tiered exam? We find the choice of Foundation or Higher is very hard, particularly for those borderline students.</p>	<p>There are no plans to change the regulations around tiering for the lifetime of this specification. Our tiering guide, available on the website, offers useful suggestions on the factors to consider when making tier of entry decisions. This includes the suggestion that students around the Grade 4-5 area should be entered for Foundation. This is because two thirds of the questions on Higher Tier Listening and Reading papers are aimed at grades 6 and above, so are likely to be beyond them. The guide suggests considering how able students are required to understand abstract and complex language, infer meaning, use a variety of language structures including different time frames etc when deciding on the more appropriate tier of entry.</p>
<p>Is it more likely that a middle ability student will get a Grade 5 on the Foundation or the Higher paper? We entered a lot of borderline students for Foundation tier this year but none of them achieved a Grade 5 but we had lots of Grade 4s.</p>	<p>The level of performance required to achieve a Grade 4 or 5 is the same at either Foundation or Higher tier. The overlap questions which appear on both Foundation and Higher papers are very important in ensuring that this is the case and we use tier equating data to help monitor this as part of the process of setting grade boundaries.</p>

<p>Do you have advice we can give to parents and our SLT about Grade 4/5 students needing to sit the Foundation and not Higher tier?</p>	<p>Please refer them to our detailed guidance on tier of entry on our website – https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/languages/AQA-GCSE-MFL-TG-FH.PDF</p> <p>For the reasons explained in the webinar and in this guidance, we would not advise students expected to gain an overall Grade 4 or 5 to be entered for Higher tier because of the risk of them falling below the minimum standard (for an allowed Grade 3) at Higher tier and getting a U grade. Student certificates do not indicate if a grade is awarded at Foundation tier or Higher tier.</p>
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Theme two: grading and awarding

Questions and answers

Question	Expert answer
<p>Is there any possibility of the Foundation papers being regraded to Grades 1 – 6 as our students need a certain number of Grade 6s to join the sixth form? They therefore feel that they have to take Higher tier, when really Foundation tier would be more appropriate based on their ability?</p>	<p>The grading system is not something which is controlled by exam boards. This is the responsibility of Ofqual and DfE and applies across all tiered GCSE subjects.</p>
<p>It seems that if a student sits the Foundation papers, they are more likely to get a Grade 3. Does this not suggest that the Foundation papers are too complex for our lower ability students?</p>	<p>Any students performing around Grade 4-5 should be entered for Foundation tier, as should students performing around Grade 3. The papers have questions targeted at all the grades covered by the paper, ie FT Grades 1-5. The new GCSE specification does have different requirements to the legacy GCSE, particularly around minimum levels of performance in that we have to demonstrate progression from Key Stage 3 in our assessments. For example, in the Writing papers, the minimum level of response is to write short texts, using simple sentences.</p>
<p>Why are some grade boundaries within a language lower in one skill than in another, eg German Reading?</p>	<p>Different papers perform in different ways in each exam series and the grade boundaries for that paper will reflect the level of demand. Each student's final grade is made up of the marks they achieve across the four skills so the grade boundaries for the different papers are notional.</p>
<p>How wide is the Higher tier Grade 3 boundary from 2019 onwards?</p>	<p>The Grade 3 boundary from 2019 onwards is fixed for all languages at half the width of the Grade 4/5 band.</p>

<p>The grade boundaries were increased this year and this impacted our predictions. Is this likely to happen again?</p>	<p>The statistical predictions used during awarding indicate the ability of the cohort as a whole, so 'comparable outcomes' ensures that the standard is carried forward at subject level. To ensure the appropriate proportions of students get the grades, the grade boundaries have to be set to ensure these outcomes. The boundaries may change because some papers in the series prove to be more accessible than the previous series (eg French Listening in 2019) and because teachers are more experienced in preparing students for the exam. Grade boundaries change to make sure that the grades are no easier or harder to get from one year to the next when the papers prove less or more challenging than in the previous year (which we can tell from the mean mark scored by students).</p>
<p>The Foundation level papers are still much too challenging for the less able linguists. Surely after reviewing the 2018 papers as you described in the webcast, the 2019 papers could have been adjusted accordingly to make them more accessible? It is demoralising for students to sit an exam that does not have a suitable level of challenge. What will happen in 2020?</p>	<p>The Foundation papers target grades 1 to 5 with similar numbers of marks targeted at each grade. Obviously, this means that a significant part of the paper is aimed at grades 4-5 and that is what used to be Grade C and above. A thorough review took place after the 2018 exam and changes were indeed made to the 2019 tests as a result. The 2019 Listening papers in French, for example, were clearly more accessible and mean marks were higher than in 2018. The translations at Higher tier in French and German in 2018 were more challenging than anticipated and the mean marks increased in this task in 2019. However, papers will always cover all the grades ie there will be questions on Foundation papers that students performing below a Grade 4-5 will find challenging. This is necessary to differentiate across the range of performance.</p>

<p>It is becoming very difficult to accurately predict a GCSE grade in MFL. Can you give us any help with this?</p>	<p>As you know, grade boundaries change according to various factors including overall cohort ability and whether the papers were more or less demanding than expected. It is important to focus on student performance in mock exams based on previous papers with published mark schemes and grade boundaries rather than on the raw scores which may well change from year to year. It is the overall performance across all four papers which determines the grade - the same level of performance should achieve the same grade in any given year. An overall grade 7 performance, for example, in any given year should get the same grade in another year.</p>
<p>What percentage of candidates gained a grade 9 in each language, given the number of native speaker candidates in the UK? Will AQA consider increasing the numbers of students achieving this top grade so non-native speakers are not discriminated against.</p> <p>Would a high proportion of native speakers (for example in German) affect the grades of non-native speakers?</p>	<p>This data is available on our website:</p> <p>https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/over/stat_pdf/AQA-GCSE-STATS-JUN-2019.PDF</p> <p>The grade boundaries are not skewed by native speakers who have not come up through the English school system and have not done KS2 tests. The grade boundaries are determined with reference to statistical predictions based on students who have KS2 results and therefore have been in the English school system since at least Year 6, ie normally at least five years prior to taking their GCSEs. The raw results of students without KS2 results are added into the process after the grade boundaries have been recommended by the awarding committee and approved by Ofqual. Students without KS2 results will therefore not skew the proportions of students getting the grades; there is no finite number of students who can achieve each grade so 'native speakers' (which of course is a very difficult term to define and the nature of semi-native speakers is a very broad spectrum) do not prevent any students with KS2 results achieving the top grades. The comparable outcomes approach ensures that a similar proportion of students with KS2 results</p>

	<p>achieve each grade, assuming that the cohort of students is broadly comparable to that of the previous year. This proportion is therefore unaffected by students without KS2 results.</p> <p>For A-level it is GCSE outcomes which are used as a prior attainment measure. For A-level, following research, Ofqual took action to take account of the semi-native speakers who had in fact been educated in the UK and were matched with prior attainment outcomes.</p> <p>Exam boards are not able to simply award more top grades – please refer to the guidance on how grades are awarded on our website for a detailed explanation of how awarding works and also a video outline of the process. aqa.org.uk/news/a-whistle-stop-guide-to-setting.-marking-and-grading-exams</p> <p>You may be aware that Ofqual are currently conducting a review into the grading standards of French, German and Spanish GCSE relative to other subjects and will be publishing the results of this research and their decisions on this in the coming months.</p>
<p>If the checks on marking are so stringent, how is it possible for a student's speaking marking to go up by 9 marks when reviewed?</p>	<p>Quality of marking is something which is extremely important for all schools who enter their students for AQA exams and we are constantly working to ensure that students are awarded the appropriate mark for their work. There are a number of methods of monitoring accuracy of marking throughout the marking period to ensure examiners are applying the agreed standard. However, there is always the potential for inaccurate marking not to be identified as part of this monitoring process and this can mean that mark changes like this are made as a result of a review of marking.</p>

If we cannot give targeted grades based on mock results due to grade boundaries changing year on year, then how are we to assess students and give them a predicted grade at times in the year when they haven't covered all of the topics?

The published grade boundaries relate to a specific year so if you're using the 2018 question paper, you'd use the 2018 grade boundaries; if you use the 2019 papers, you use the 2019 grade boundaries and so on. Changes in the boundaries year on year enables us to take account of variations in the level of demand of papers ie we can lower the grade boundary if the paper has proved more challenging than anticipated (and vice versa). Giving predicted grades is always a matter of professional judgement and involves basing your assessment of how well a student will do in the final exam on how well they have answered questions on the themes and topics already covered at the time of the mock exam ie how much progress are they likely to make between the time of the mock and the time of their final exam.

Theme three: Paper 1 listening

Questions and answers

Question	Expert answer
<p>How is the level of language determined in the Listening and Reading papers? At times, it seems way above GCSE level at Higher tier.</p>	<p>The level of demand is determined by the DfE subject content for languages. This was published by DfE at the start of the reform process for GCSEs and formed the basis of each exam board's specification and sample assessments. It lays down what specifications have to require of students eg we have to test comprehension of gist and of detail, of more abstract and complex language, of texts drawn from a variety of sources including literary sources, of extended as well as shorter texts. It requires us to test students' ability to draw conclusions and infer meaning and to understand unfamiliar language. All this means that the questions targeted at grades 6-9 at Higher Tier (around two-thirds of the paper) and especially those targeted at grades 8-9 (around a third of the marks) will be challenging; we would expect only a small proportion of the candidature to gain the marks for questions targeted at grades 8-9. This variation in level of demand across the questions is necessary to ensure that the paper discriminates across the range for whom the paper is intended and rewards students differently according to their performance in the paper. If the paper failed to discriminate in this way, marks would be bunched and grade boundaries would be too close together, which is not desirable assessment practice. Bunching of grade boundaries caused by a failure in the exams to differentiate effectively between different levels of performance would mean that just a few marks could mean a difference in more than one grade, which would not be in the interests of either teachers or students.</p>

<p>How much of the vocabulary in the Listening and Reading papers can we expect to be outside the vocabulary lists in the specification?</p>	<p>There is no set number of words each year but we are required by the DfE subject content to test beyond the core vocabulary lists in the specification. At Foundation Tier, we will be testing words which are common or familiar. These could be words which students know from their prior study or words which are cognates, near cognates or which can be accessed through the communication strategies in the specifications. At Higher Tier, we will be testing words which are less common or familiar than those tested at Foundation Tier. Again, students will be expected to use the knowledge from their prior study and communication strategies in the specification to access these words. There is a whole section in the specification (3.4) which covers communication strategies which will help students cope successfully with unknown words. These strategies should be incorporated into teaching and learning for GCSE.</p>
<p>Are the students allowed to annotate their Listening paper during the 5 minutes' reading time (eg write possible words in French that could come up in the recording so they know what to listen out for?)</p>	<p>Absolutely. This is good practice. It is also advisable for students to flag up the start of Section B on their papers either by circling it or writing 'French' to remind themselves that they have to answer in French in this part of the paper. Also, it is good to make a note of those questions which require more than one question to be answered from one piece of heard material, for example by putting a bracket round them in the reading time to act as a reminder when the test gets to these questions.</p>
<p>What is your advice re highlighting exam papers? Our students find this really helpful, but have been discouraged by invigilators</p>	<p>Yes, the use of highlighters is permitted to annotate question papers, but they must not be used to write students' answers. See JCQ Instructions, page 36, section 19.3.</p>
<p>When you say that students should clearly cross out their original answer if they have changed their mind and write their final answer alongside it, would you accept their answer if they have to write it outside the answer box?</p>	<p>Yes, of course, as long as it is legible.</p>

<p>Do you plan to make the exams more accessible culturally for students? For example, the majority of my students have never been skiing and sometimes the questions include inferences on topics such as skiing holidays, which appear to favour the more middle-class student.</p>	<p>Every effort is made to ensure that the papers are not socially or culturally biased and do not advantage particular groups in society. Students do not need to have had direct experience of every scenario included in an exam. If students have understood the language in the tasks, they will be able to answer the questions set.</p> <p>Part of the purpose of studying a language is to introduce students to new customs and cultural content that they may previously have been unaware of, or familiar with. Indeed, the DfE subject content for MFL GCSE states 'The study of a modern foreign language at GCSE should also broaden students' horizons and encourage them to step beyond familiar cultural boundaries and develop new ways of seeing the world.' The topic areas to be covered within each theme are detailed in the specification and in the core vocabulary lists and questions are designed to be answerable with knowledge of these areas and the relevant vocabulary.</p> <p>Practising teachers from a range of different types of schools comment on draft questions throughout the setting process. We consider all teacher feedback on our exams in an annual review and that feeds into future question setting. So, we are keen to see this as a cycle of continuous improvement and always take into account the feedback from teachers as well as the evidence from marking data in terms of how students performed on each question.</p>
<p>There used to be clear Grade 1/Grade G questions in the old-style exams. Why are there no longer these sorts of accessible questions in the Listening papers at Foundation tier?</p>	<p>The new GCSE is more challenging than the legacy specifications so the legacy questions which were aimed at Grade G are no longer part of the assessments. Those sorts of questions were deemed by Ofqual and DfE to be more appropriate at KS3.</p> <p>One of the areas of feedback from Ofqual on</p>

	<p>the first submission of the draft specification was about not testing single lexical items, as it was felt that this did not demonstrate sufficient progression from Key Stage 3. The Subject Content document also refers as a minimum to the requirement for students to 'write short texts, using simple sentences', so a list-type question was not appropriate. Question 1 on the Foundation Writing paper, for example, is aimed at the lowest grades and as long as the sentence communicates a message clearly, it will receive credit.</p> <p>We do ensure that an appropriate proportion of the available marks on all our assessments are accessible to students performing at all the different levels being tested.</p>
<p>The Spanish Higher Listening paper in 2019 was very challenging with a low mean mark. Is this a concern to you?</p>	<p>Yes, the mean mark for this paper in 2019 was lower than the mean marks in the other skills and this was reflected in where the notional grade boundaries were placed for this paper. The post series analysis of the 2019 questions will provide useful insight for future papers.</p>
<p>How do you explain the difference between mean marks in the German Listening papers compared with French and Spanish?</p>	<p>Different papers in different languages will have different mean marks, dependent on the cohort and on the tasks within the paper. Grade boundaries take account of this.</p>
<p>Why are answers on the Higher tier Listening paper so specific? As a teacher completing the Higher paper, I struggled to find the correct answer and feel that the questions are trying to trick students rather than demonstrating comprehension.</p>	<p>There is a requirement in the DfE subject content for reading for gist and for detail. At Higher Tier, questions targeted at the higher grades have to test students' ability to read carefully enough to discount the distractors and identify the correct information for the response. It's not a question of 'trying to trick' students, but rather a question of ensuring that in eg a Higher Listening or Reading paper there are questions where only a small proportion of the students will be able to gain the mark. This is important because we have to discriminate across the range of performance and ensure that the most able</p>

	<p>students gain a higher mark than those who are able but not at the very top end of the performance range. If this discrimination across the range of performance is not achieved, the marks are bunched and grade boundaries are placed too close together.</p>
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Theme four: Paper 2 speaking

Questions and answers

Question	Expert answer
On the Foundation photo card, will the two unseen questions only ever be in the present tense?	Yes, the question in the non-present tense time frame will always be one of the three on the student's card.
How does the Speaking examiner achieve a balance between giving credit for fairly simple language produced perfectly against attempts at more complex structures which may contain a certain number of errors?	The approach depends on the task being marked and the balance of marks available. The published mark schemes contain all the detail which the examiners use and a best fit approach is taken to the levels of response mark schemes where these are used. The top band for Range and accuracy of language at Foundation tier refers to ' <i>Generally good language which involves mainly simple linguistic structures and vocabulary, with some repetition, but with attempts to use more complex linguistic structures and more varied vocabulary ... Although there may be errors they do not generally impede comprehension.</i> So, there are a number of different strands to base the final mark on in this part of the criteria.
Can you suggest guidance on the need for extended answers in the speaking exam (eg narration) and the need to show spontaneity?	Spontaneity can be demonstrated through the use of follow up questions, responding to what the student has just said, eg seeking clarification, extra detail, opinions. Students should give longer developed answers through uses of connectives and complex structures (see criteria). Narration should be considered as extension of answers.
Are we going to be able to upload speaking exams this year rather than use encrypted CDs or USB sticks, which took time and are expensive.	No, CDs or USB sticks will still be required but there is no longer a requirement for 2020 onwards to encrypt these for audio recordings. CDs are of course usually a cheaper option than USB sticks but we appreciate that some schools find USB sticks more convenient – either format is fine. We do hope to be able to offer electronic upload of recordings at some point in the future, however.

<p>How closely to the speaking exam time limits do the examiners stick? For example, if a student finishes an answer 5 seconds after the maximum time limit, would they be penalised?</p>	<p>The General Conversation should last for 3-5 minutes at Foundation and 5-7 minutes at Higher. We recommend that teachers conducting the tests use a stopwatch at the start of this section of the test to ensure that they adhere to these timings. If the teacher-examiner is still asking a question, or if the candidate is still answering a question, when the maximum time allowed has been reached, the candidate is allowed to give his/her full response even if this takes him/her beyond the maximum time and all of the language produced up to that point will be marked. No additional questions can be asked after that, and if they are, the candidate's responses from that point on will not be assessed. If a student is slightly under the allocated time, there is no automatic penalty; however, if they are considerably under the recommended timings, they are unlikely to have access to the higher mark bands in the assessment criteria because they will not have produced enough language to meet the requirements of these mark bands.</p> <p>The same principles are applied to the Photo card section of the test (maximum 2 minutes at Foundation and 3 at Higher).</p> <p>Please refer to the <i>Instructions for the conduct of the exams</i> and our 'Getting started' FAQs on the website for more information on the conduct of the test.</p>
<p>How much weight is put on longer, developed answers in the speaking exam? Is it advantageous to mix them up with shorter sentences to improve spontaneity?</p>	<p>Please refer to the guidance on the use of pre-prepared language and follow-up questions in the speaking test conduct webinar training and the <i>Instructions for the conduct of the exams</i> as well as our FAQs (Getting started) on the website to enable students to access marks for spontaneity and fluency in the Speaking test. The published mark schemes also explain the criteria for the award of marks in the Speaking test in detail. There is also guidance from the Lead Examiners in the reports on the exam for Speaking.</p>
<p>How many pieces of information per question would you consider a developed answer in the general conversation of the Higher speaking test?</p>	<p>Any development of an answer has to be in the form of a clause ie it must include a verb. There is no specific number but the top band of the criteria for Communication at Higher tier refers to 'a speaker who consistently develops responses in extended sequences of speech'.</p>

<p>Is it okay if all students have different questions for the speaking exam?</p>	<p>It's not only okay but strongly recommended that students are not all asked the same questions in the Speaking test in the general conversation, Questions should be tailored according to students' interests and abilities. Having a bank of starter questions is a good approach but then teacher-examiners should be following up on what students say to demonstrate spontaneity.</p>
<p>We used to receive individual centre feedback after each series rather than booking into general feedback events but this doesn't appear to be the case anymore. This was useful to know where we as a department could improve. Are there any plans to revert to this individual centre feedback in the future?</p>	<p>As the speaking component in this specification is not marked by teachers, there is no requirement for Feedback forms in the same way as for other subjects where teachers do mark the student work and then this is moderated by AQA. However, we feel it is important for schools to receive individual feedback on the Speaking test if there are issues relating to the conduct of the test which affected students' marks. If there are no issues, from 2019 onwards, an email was sent to the school to confirm this. For every paper, you can see the breakdown of students' marks per task and per assessment criterion in the Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA) tool in e-AQA. This helps you identify where the areas are that could be improved upon for future students.</p>
<p>Is it possible to have feedback on the speaking test that is specific to a certain candidate? We had some general comments and some candidate numbers but it was not clear which candidate had been affected by the problem mentioned.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, it isn't possible to give individual feedback. The Teacher Tester Performance Record (TTPR) form should indicate examples of candidate numbers where the comment mentioned was an issue, so you can go back to the recordings and re-listen.</p>
<p>Some of the role plays seemed to be much more difficult than others eg talking to a friend about free time versus booking gym places - are there any plans to address this disparity in level of demand?</p>	<p>We take great care to ensure that role plays are comparable in level of demand. However, this is based on the role play as a whole; sometimes, a role play might have a task that is more difficult than a task on another role play but this will be balanced out by another task which is easier, so that overall the two role plays are of comparable demand. We take into account all teacher feedback (on all exams); this is considered alongside evidence of how students performed on each exam question (including role plays) at an annual review and this insight is then fed into the setting of future questions.</p>

<p>Is there any chance of photocards being in colour so that less able students can use those in their description?</p>	<p>No, we published in our FAQs on the website in 2017 that all live exams would be in black and white. AQA's policy is to use colour in question papers only where it is essential to the subject eg maps in Geography.</p>
<p>Will USB sticks be returned to schools from the 2019 series?</p>	<p>No, we do not return USB sticks and we publish in our <i>Instructions for the conduct of the exams (ICE)</i> on the website that, once submitted, the tests become the property of AQA. CDs are of course usually a cheaper option than USB sticks but we appreciate that some schools find USB sticks more convenient – either format is fine. We do recommend that you keep a copy of the recordings.</p>
<p>Were there wider issues with role play 16 in Spanish? The teacher script was very misleading. Will there be similar ambiguities this year?</p>	<p>Please refer to the detailed comments on this role play card in the published Report on the exam 2019 in e-AQA.</p> <p>Any queries about any of the confidential Speaking test materials during the testing window need to be raised with AQA by phone between the teacher's preparation work and their starting to conduct the tests, as explained in the MFL <i>Instructions for the conduct of the exams</i> on the website.</p>
<p>In Speaking, is an answer with a relevant time marker but the wrong tense used considered as a valid response?</p>	<p>This will depend on the task being conducted and whether communication is impeded – please refer to the published mark schemes for the role play, photo card and the general conversation. A sentence or phrase such as '<i>Demain je vais au cinéma</i>' would count as a future time frame without the use of a verb in the future tense, for example. A sentence such as '<i>Demain je suis allé au cinéma</i>' creates ambiguity as to when the event happened and would be marked accordingly.</p>
<p>How can we better prepare students for the role play?</p>	<p>We certainly recommend working through sample and past papers and the detailed marking guidance in the published mark schemes with students to help them understand the requirements of the role play task. A range of other support materials are available including an excellent resource produced by Teachit 'Success with Speaking' to help prepare students for all aspects of the speaking test. There is also a PowerPoint and Teachers' Notes in the Teach tab on the subject page for your language on the AQA website which can be used as a resource for teaching the role play task.</p>

<p>What happens if teachers forget to prompt the students to ask a question in the general conversation?</p>	<p>If the student does not ask you a question in the general conversation, one mark is deducted for Communication (see <i>Instructions for the conduct of the exams</i>). Students can ask the question in the nominated theme so they don't forget and you can prompt the question at any point in the general conversation, so make sure it is within the time allowed. Some questions in 2019 were asked by students at the end of the general conversation and fell outside of the time allowed and could not be credited.</p>
<p>My Spanish Speaking results in general this year seem to have been very harshly marked. What do I need to do?</p>	<p>All queries about individual results have to go to our post-results team. The deadline for requests for reviews of marking was 20 Sept. If you had some reviews and still have further concerns, you need to go back to the post-results team for advice.</p>

Theme five: Paper 3 reading

Questions and answers

Question	Expert answer
<p>How do you respond to comments that the German Higher Reading Paper was more akin to IB/ A-level?</p> <p>Why was German Higher Reading so hard compared to last year?</p>	<p>Some questions targeted at the higher grades will test higher level listening skills, eg require students to deal with more abstract texts, make inference and draw conclusions. This paper did prove to be challenging and this was reflected in where the notional grade boundaries were placed. The post series review and analysis of this paper will provide insight for future papers.</p>
<p>For Spanish, do students need to be able to use the subjunctive or simply to recognise it in a reading text or translation?</p>	<p>If you have a look at the grammar list on page 14 of the specification, it clarifies this for you.</p>
<p>Some topics in the Reading papers aren't always relevant to all students. Some can be seen as elitist and outside some students' life experience? Are these being reviewed?</p>	<p>Students do not need to have had direct experience of every scenario included in an exam. If students have understood the language in the tasks, they will be able to answer the questions set. Part of the purpose of studying a language is to introduce students to new customs and cultural content that they may previously have been unaware of, or familiar with. Indeed, the DfE subject content for MFL GCSE states 'The study of a modern foreign language at GCSE should also broaden students' horizons and encourage them to step beyond familiar cultural boundaries and develop new ways of seeing the world.' The topic areas to be covered within each theme are detailed in the specification and in the core vocabulary lists, and questions are designed to be answerable with knowledge of these areas and the relevant vocabulary.</p>

Theme six: support and resources

Questions and answers

Question	Expert answer
Can you offer us any advice on how to improve our students' listening skills?	Have a look at Exampro, which is an online question bank with lots of sample questions for Listening, Reading and Writing. You can create your own topic tests and revision exercises for students at the touch of a button. We also have an online course for Developing Listening and Reading skills later this year. More information can be found on our professional development page at this link: https://www.aqa.org.uk/professional-development
Are the feedback events you mention free of charge?	No, they are chargeable at £110 per login but one login can be purchased and a whole department take part in the session.
Are there any exemplar materials available for teachers on the AQA website?	Yes, these are in the Assess tab and there is a wealth of exemplar responses in the Teacher Support Materials folder in e-AQA, Secure Key Materials. The feedback meetings will have new 2019 exemplars, so well worth booking a place.
The feedback events say P1/P2/P3/P4 - what do these acronyms mean?	These are the 4 papers ie Listening is Paper 1, Speaking Paper 2, Reading is Paper 3 and Writing is Paper 4.
Are there sessions available where we can go through student answers in depth?	For an in-depth look at student answers with examiner commentary, you can book onto one of our Feedback events using the link in the resource list or on the Professional Development pages of our website.
Where can you find the list of little words mentioned that pupils often fail to recognise?	There is a document in the Effective Exam Prep course materials in e-AQA, Secure Key Materials, Teacher Support Materials folder, Booklet 3 which has a list of them you can print out and give to students to learn. There is also a list of 'false friends'.

<p>Will there be exemplar material available for Writing and Speaking from 2019 to see what each grade looks like?</p>	<p>We will use a range of materials from the 2019 exam series at our Feedback events, which you can click to book using the link in the resource list. We do not look at work specifically on the basis of individual grades but a range of performances is included.</p>
<p>Could we please have a lot more exemplars of marked student Writing and Speaking tasks on the AQA website?</p>	<p>The online feedback sessions for each language include examples of marked work and you can register for these on our website. The materials from these sessions, including the examples of marked work, will be available to teacher unable to attend the feedback meetings on e-AQA Secure Key Materials in the Teacher support materials folder later this year, after the Feedback meeting have finished.</p>
<p>Are there any updated exemplar materials available to those who are not able to or cannot afford to attend feedback events?</p>	<p>Yes, the course materials from the 2019 Feedback events (including marked example student work with commentaries) will be placed in e-AQA for all teachers to access approximately six weeks after the last meeting early in 2020. The 2018 feedback materials can be accessed in Secure Key Materials, Teacher Support Materials folder.</p>
<p>Are there any new materials on Exampro? There are only a few examples of translation tasks.</p>	<p>Please contact the Exampro support line on 0345 145 1500 and they will be happy to provide details of plans for new resources and discuss any concerns or suggestions you may have about the current provision.</p>
<p>Why do you charge for access to scripts when other exam boards offer them free of charge?</p>	<p>Our technology does not currently allow for electronic access to scripts and therefore there are costs involved in providing them to centres. From 2020 we will be offering <i>priority</i> access to scripts for GCSE though this will not be electronic.</p>
<p>What level of experience is required for examiners? How many years teaching experience is needed and do you have to be teaching the AQA specification?</p>	<p>Examiners need to have a minimum of one full year's teaching experience (this could be two years on a 0.5 contract, for example). While familiarity with the AQA specification is of course advantageous, it is not a requirement to be teaching the AQA specification.</p>

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